

A ROLE FOR THE CSRC&D COUNCIL IN FORESTED WATERSHED RESTORATION

INTRODUCTION

As discussed on August 6, 1997, at Bear Valley, the inability of small mountain counties to deal with the complexities of upper watershed restoration opportunities (Proposition 204) is evident. Our frustration stems from difficulty in defining projects to meet restrictive funding requirements, and a suspicion we are chasing project funding without a clear view of the condition of our watersheds. I suggest we start at the beginning, to build watershed councils who will address the issue of forested watershed health, and then define targets and desired future conditions. This is not a new layer of government, but an organizing of existing watershed interests and the incredible mass of resource information now in the database.

Building Institutional Capacity

1. Establish intent of CSRC&D Council to sponsor or organize a watershed council.
2. Immediately seek grant funding to accomplish the establishment of a specific watershed council in the Central Sierra.
3. Define a "concept" of the watershed council's responsibility and ask for all stakeholder participation in formation meetings.
4. Organize the watershed council; establish goals and objectives; select a short term program of planning to guide the watershed council; review CSRC&D's continued involvement.

NOTE: 1 to 4 require grant funding and about 1 year time, with considerable RC&D council involvement.

The next steps chosen by the watershed council could be:

- A. Gather and evaluate all existing watershed data.
- B. Establish evaluation criteria for forest health (watershed) determination.
- C. Define targets and desired future conditions.
- D. Define projects, after review of biophysical, economic and political factors.

NOTE: Additional grant funding is needed at Step A, with a watershed coordinator position in place, similar to the National Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) Pitt River coordinator.

OVERVIEW

Obviously this is not a quick fix for watershed problems. The deliverables, depending on energy expended, are a more clear view of forested watershed health and restoration priorities that any stakeholder can put into effect. In this concept, all major watersheds in the Sierra Nevada would benefit as the CSRC&D Council succeeds in this role.

Frank Jerauld
CSEDD Board Member

cwp:memofj